

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000398

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY), NEA/P (FFINVER), INR/R/MR
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER/ASILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAQ KMDR OIIP MU

SUBJECT: AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS, AN ARAB SUMMIT AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

2004 Human Rights Report - Oman Responds

¶1. On March 5, the Privately-owned Arabic daily "Al-Watan" carried an editorial by Atif Abul Jawad, an Egyptian journalist entitled "The Sad Joke":

"The 2004 Human Rights Report published by the U.S. Department of State is an expos on the status of human rights world wide. However, one of the unfortunate things about the report that severely tarnishes its credibility is that it harshly criticizes Iraqi soldiers for violating the human rights of Iraqi citizens during the initial American invasion. Ironically, the report does not include a single sentence about the heinous human rights abuses that Iraqi prisoners suffered at the hands of U.S. soldiers. America acknowledges no responsibility for those actions. America's failure to take responsibility for the actions of her soldiers means that the 2004 Human Rights Report does not have the moral standing that previous reports have had."

American Presence, Arab Resistance

¶2. The government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an editorial on March 5 entitled "American Initiatives in the Region between Acceptance and Rejection":

"Why are Arab political leaders so passive about the American initiatives in the region? Why do our leaders want to satisfy America by any means? Are they afraid that standing up to America could jeopardize their ability to remain in power? America is engaging in psychological warfare against the region by pressuring Iran, and causing Syria to announce its dissatisfaction with reforms in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. . It is clear that the United States is a great military and economic power. However this does not mean that it has the right to use force to make the world conform to its wishes. Power has its limitations and America has exceeded them. Our leaders need not confront America in the military sense; rather they should initiate serious dialogues that move them away from their current policy of quiet appeasement. Arab countries must not compete to for America's favorable attentions at the expense of their greater interests. We -- Arab Countries -- must unify and stand with Syria, Lebanon and Iraq at the upcoming Arab summit in Algeria, against American initiatives in the region."

Equal Threats, Unequal Response

¶3. On March 6, "Al-Watan" published an editorial by Omani journalist Saud Al-Harthy entitled, "Political Duplicity is clear on the Iranian Nuclear Issue":

"The American administration should ask itself why its reaction to North Korea's nuclear program is different from its reaction to Iran's program. Some experts believe that America would never have waged war against Iraq if it actually believed that Iraq had nuclear weapons. Hence, some experts ask whether the U.S. hopes to use the pretext of nuclear weapons as an excuse to attack Iran. Iran may not be as big a threat as the U.S. says."

BALTIMORE